

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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February 28, 2023

Jacklynn Gould, Regional Director  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Lower Colorado Basin  
P.O. Box 61470  
Boulder City, NV 89006-1470

Dear Director Gould:

I write to express my support for Mesa Water District's application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART grant program for their Local Groundwater Supply Improvement Project feasibility study (Local SiP). The Local SiP will explore the feasibility and benefits of desalinating brackish groundwater to improve supply reliability within the Orange County Groundwater Basin (OC Basin).

Climate change is causing increasingly extreme weather conditions throughout California, and prolonged droughts and unpredictable precipitation patterns are harming water reliability throughout the state. The Local SiP will directly address concerns of water supply reliability by providing critical information in determining the feasibility of desalinating brackish groundwater. This represents the possible expansion of local water sources, reducing the reliance on more costly imported water.

Diversification of local water supplies is critical to the OC Basin, which provides water for over 2.5 million people. For decades, water districts in the OC Basin have led the way in potable water reuse and water use efficiency. The Local SiP will build on this leadership by studying a multi-agency collaboration between Mesa Water District, the Orange County Water District, the City of Huntington Beach, and the City of Newport Beach to determine the feasibility of utilizing existing groundwater as a new supply source for the OC Basin. This source has the potential to be abundant, affordable, environmentally-sensitive, high-quality, local, reliable, sustainable, and resilient to climate change, drought, and other potential disruptions to water supplies.

I look forward to seeing the benefits that the Local SiP will provide for our water supply and Orange County families. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact my District Director, Cody Mendoza, at (949) 668-6600.

Very truly yours,



Katie Porter